173 Any interpretation of this legend must be labeled conjecture and hardly
101 even scientific inference, let alone fact. Nevertheless, it could mean more
[131] or less this: That there was a tribe called Kamarakoto living somewhere north of the Cuyuní and east of the Caroní in colonial times; that some members of this tribe fled before the attacks of other Indians (cf. Ramón Bueno) or from the missionaries and other white invaders (the present Kamarakoto belief; the dislike of the Indians for the missionaries can also be read between the lines of Ramón Bueno) and settled down in or near Kamarata; that they were there absorbed into an Arekuna population already present or one that drifted in from the east, and that the resultant mixed tribe eventually became wholly Arekuna
[144] in speech, culture and physique. A weak point is that the "ancient Kamarakotos" must themselves have been physically identical with the Arekunas, because the Kamarakotos are so today and would hardly be if they were mixed with another tribe of different physical character.

173 More recent events are usually treated with equal vagueness. The most
● 172 definite is the memory of a great tribal war, more than two generations ago, between the Kamarakotos and surrounding tribes, particularly the Mwerwan, a tribe said to have lived on the Caroní and now to be extinct. A dispute over fishing rights between normally friendly tribes led to a general and bloody war. There has been no warfare within the last two generations.

173 The cacique, Alejo Calcaño, told me that a "bishop" (i.e. a priest or
797 missionary of some sort) visited this region some thirty years ago, in Alejo's life-time, distributed presents, but did not preach or teach, and forthwith disappeared never to be seen again. I have not been able to find any record of such a visit. Other Indians mention brief visits of missionaries (the same, or others?) which they place at anything from a generation to five years ago. The recently established missions of the Alto Caroní have not yet come in contact with the Kamarakotos.

Basis of This Study

101 The materials for the present study were gathered during several weeks'
114 residence in Kamarata, the valley south of Auyán-tepúi, early in 1939 with the Comisión Exploradora de la Gran Sabana of the Ministerio de Fomento of
122 the Venezuelan Government. I cannot too heartily thank all the officials concerned for their generosity and their splendid co-operation in making this work possible for me, and I wish particularly to mention the Minister of Fomento, Dr. Manuel Egaña, and my companions and the leaders of the expedition, members of the Servicio Técnico de Minería y Geología, Drs. Victor M.
114 Lopez, Santiago Aguerrevere, Carlos Delgado, and Carlos Freeman. Thanks to them and to the excellent equipment and organization of the expedition, I

231 We did not see dogs hunting, but these that we saw around the homes looked extraordinarily mangy and ill-found and acted as if they could be of no possible use. Some are merely kept as pets and the children play with them but the adults generally ignore them completely. [171] None of them are watchdogs or show any courage or assertiveness. It was said that the Maquiritares raise exceptionally good hunting dogs, and that these are sometimes acquired by trading, but we saw none of this favored breed.[117] [192] The curious fact that the Kamarakotos use the Spanish word for "dog" (which they pronounce peró, not perro), although there is a widespread Carib name for them, suggests that the Kamarakotos may not have had dogs until recently, although other Carib tribes apparently have had them a long time, probably since pre-Columbian times. In any case, dogs play a very minor role among the Kamarakotos and are far less abundant and useful than among many allied Indians.

411 174 [114] Most of the Guayana and Amazon Indians seem formerly to have used wooden clubs, often elaborately carved and decorated and of characteristic form for each tribe (see Schomburgk, Koch-Grünberg, Roth, and, indeed, almost any detailed account of travels in this general region). Used mainly for warfare, now an obsolescent occupation, these clubs seem almost everywhere to be dropping out of use. The Kamarakotos undoubtedly formerly used these, but I saw none among them, and could obtain no evidence that they are now made or used, even, as among many tribes, as ceremonial or dance accessories.

Fishing.

226 [242] 423 [72] [685] Fish is a favorite food of the Indians and fishing is a favorite sport and, in the case of fish poisoning, social event. Fishing rights are well defined and jealously guarded — the only serious Indian war that the Kamarakotos remember arose from infringement of these rights and such infringement is still, in theory at least, a capital offense.

Fish are taken with bow and arrow, hook and line, hand net, trap, and poison. Fish spears and casting or set nets appear to be unknown. The principal fishing arrow, waibakasi, has already been described. The trident fishing arrow of some allied tribes was not seen, and this method of catching fish is not now much used by the Kamarakotos, especially as large fish are now rare. In fish-poisoning some of the fish that are stunned but not dead are shot with arrows, usually mere sharpened sticks, but this is more a sport for the boys (and more sportive men) than a serious method of obtaining the fish.

227 [172] 439 All the Indians of the Guianas and Venezuela and most of those of Brazil by now have steel hooks of foreign manufacture, a favorite article of trade that penetrated the region farther and faster than explorers have. They have a native name, kunoi[v] in Kamarakoto, and doubtless have displaced native wooden hooks although these are now quite unknown to the Kamarakotos who consider

117 [see footnote on p. 320, category 116 - Analyst]

462 women do rather more than half of the heavy carrying, but I have already noted that the men are really ready to assist if needed, and the men do considerable work, such as the very laborious basketwork, that might, a priori, be believed to be woman's work.

[171] The general pattern of this division of labor is typically Carib, but the details vary much from tribe to tribe. For instance planting, here done by the man, is commonly woman's work elsewhere and hammocks, here made by women, are often made by men elsewhere.

Legal Concepts

Property.

421 The Indians are not capitalists in that they have no permanent title to real property, no personal command of the means of production, no accumulated or hereditary wealth, and no property right in the labor of others. At the same time they have a very real and lively sense of personal property and in other ways also their society is decidedly not communistic. In general what an individual makes or uses is his. When he ceases to use it, it reverts to the public domain.

423 Thus it could be said that the land, in general, belongs to the tribe in common, or that it belongs to no one, but when a man clears a conuco or builds a house on a portion of land, that land is his. No one has the right to use it (or even to enter it against his wishes) as long as he is in occupation, and its products are exclusively his, free of any obligation to share or divide them. When he leaves it, however, he cannot transfer title to it. It reverts to commons and any comer can occupy it or enjoy its fruits and use. The same is true of structures erected on the land.

592 Such property may be said to belong to the household group or to the
423 to›-esa? as its leader and representative. Another very important special case
226 of such ownership is that of fishing rights. According to custom, which of course is the equivalent of uncodified law, a household established on or near a stream owns the fishing rights on that stream from its dwelling downstream as far as the next habitation. These rights are very rigidly maintained. Even a fish killed upstream is lost to the killer if it floats below the next household before being gathered. Of course several or many households do commonly unite in poisoning a given stretch of water and all share in the results, but this is only by invitation of the household owning the right to that water. Violation
[685] of these rights is among the most serious offenses known to the Indians, as is
[221] suggested by the fact that the last bloody war, of which they retain vivid but
[224] confused memories, is said to have arisen from such a violation. There seems, on the other hand, to be no proprietorship of hunting rights.